

The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

Spring 2008

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Spring Edition

76th Nighthawks Soar



Governor Daniels and Maj. Gen Umbarger review the troops as they march on the parade field during departure ceremony at Fort Stewart Georgia.

Story by Spc. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard

Approximately 3,000 Indiana National Guard Soldiers were honored during a final departure ceremony held at Fort Stewart, Ga., March 1.

The 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received a final farewell at Cottrell Parade Field before it departs to the Middle East to begin its mission supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A bright, warm, day complimented cheering crowds of loved ones as they lined the perimeter of the parade field to catch a glimpse of their Soldiers standing in formation during the ceremony.

Some onlookers such as Steve Knapp were once in the same position as the Soldiers who graced the parade field that day.

Knapp, a Vietnam veteran from the highly decorated Indiana Army National Guard, D Company, 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment Rangers, was watching for his son-in-law, 1st Lt. Jacob Weis, with the 113th Support Battalion, in the mass of moving soldiers.

He had mentioned his time in the service and how important it is to serve our country.



“It’s something some have to go through throughout their life. I think they are better equipped for a different kind of war from when I was in.

“I think this sendoff is great, it’s good for them to know they’re supported. People support the troops nowadays and I think it’s great.”

Many distinguished speakers came to show their support for the troops of the 76th IBCT.

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels; The Adjutant General of Indiana, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger; U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff General Richard Cody; and Commander of the First Army Division East, Maj. Gen. Jay Hood, were in proud unison when it came to speaking of how prepared the Soldiers were.

Daniels spoke of his family ties with the 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart. His grandfather and uncle served in the ranks of the Division.



He thanked the Fort Stewart staff and leaders for their hospitality and revered the Soldiers of the 76th for their hard work.

He mentioned his call to jury duty just days before and how many did not even show up for just one day. He said he told those there that did show up about the Soldiers in the Indiana National Guard that volunteer and sacrifice so much for their freedom.

Maj. Gen. Umbarger expressed his deepest honor of leading the Indiana National Guard and being able to be part of the same organization as they were.

"I am so very proud and very privileged to be able to stand in your ranks," he added.

Seemingly, the most geared up about the Brigade's readiness was its commander, Col. Courtney Carr.



He spoke highly of the training they'd endured and the mission ahead of them, all stemming from their willingness to volunteer their time, effort, and even their lives for our great country.

Carr said that when it came time to deploying, "Nighthawks dropped their plows, grabbed their muskets and joined the ranks of their fellow Hoosiers."

1st Soldier's Funeral Held at War Memorial

By Will Higgins, will.higgins@indystar.com
February 7, 2008

The Indiana War Memorial had its first funeral today, a touching send-off to career airman Wilford Carr Johnson.

Johnson died last week of natural causes at age 68. He had served 26 years in the Indiana National Guard, after serving four years in the U.S. Air Force. After retiring from the Guard, he remained active in the VFW and the American Legion. He was a member of the legion's honor guard, which provides military flourishes, such as 21-gun salutes, at veteran's funerals.

In November, Brig. Gen. J. Stewart Goodwin, executive director of the Indiana War Memorials Commission, threw open the Memorial for veterans' funerals.



Johnson's service was held in the MacArthur Room, on the building's west side. The deceased lay, in uniform, in an open casket under an oversized photo of Gen. Douglas MacArthur giving a salute.

Johnson, of Greenwood, was a gregarious person, with a large family and numerous club affiliations, including both the Eagles and Moose. More than 100 people attended his service.

Soldier Missing in Action from the Korean War is Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Sgt. Virgil L. Phillips, U.S. Army, of Columbus, Ind. He will be buried on April 19 in Loogootee, Ind.

Representatives from the Army met with Phillips' next-of-kin to explain the recovery and identification process, and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the secretary of the Army.

In November 1950, Phillips was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division then operating in Unsan, North Korea, near a bend in the Kuryong River known as the Camel's Head. On Nov. 1, parts of two Chinese Communist divisions struck the 1st Cavalry Division's lines, collapsing the perimeter and forcing a withdrawal. In the process, the 3rd Battalion was surrounded and effectively ceased to exist as a fighting unit. Phillips was one of the more than 350 servicemen unaccounted-for from the battle at Unsan.

In 2003, a joint U.S.-Democratic People's Republic of Korea team (D.P.R.K.), led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), excavated a burial site near the Camel's Head. The team recovered human remains and other material evidence. Information from the D.P.R.K. indicated that the remains were initially buried near the battle site, but were later moved to a location nearby because of construction in the area.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of Phillips' remains.

Clinton County 2007 Citizen of the Year "CVSO Joe Root".

Congratulations Joe!!

By Martha O'Brien



His compassion and respect for Clinton County veterans runs so deep that his emotions often get the best of him. His eyes well with tears when he recounts the stories of pride told by families of soldiers killed in war.

No one is born a hero, he says, and no one goes in the service to be a hero. Those who join the military do so for a variety of reasons, he says, but the bottom line is they go in to serve and protect their country. Born and raised in Frankfort, Joe Root drips with hometown pride. However, the county lacked a tribute to its war veterans and, to Root, that wasn't acceptable.

"We have people who have given their lives for Clinton County," he said, "and we have nothing here to dedicate or honor those people." So, as the county's veterans affair officer and with the help of the community, Root changed that.

That is why, for his role in creating and erecting the Clinton County Veterans Memorial, dedicated in September, The Times selected Root as its 2007 Citizen of the Year. It's an honor he is visibly moved to accept, and one he feels he shares with many.

"I didn't do this on my own," he said. "The committee I had worked very hard. We've had such a community outpouring, without the help of other people, it wouldn't be here."

A new memorial

Joe Root has no idea how much time he spent creating the memorial. It doesn't matter to him. He says it was an honor to see it through. He met his goal of funding it entirely with donations, but he doesn't have a tally on the cost either.

"I've never calculated it," he said. "I have not thought it to be pertinent."

Now Root is planning another monument. It will be built opposite the current memorial to honor the American flag. Tentative plans call for a hefty black granite flag base

that will feature a 45-foot tall pole. A few of the items already on the courthouse lawn, including the gristmill and flagpole will be moved to the site, along with the grave marker of unknown Civil War soldiers and the World War I marker.

"I have visions this will be just as grand as the memorial we have now," Root said.

He's already selling paver bricks for it and has hopes of breaking ground this spring. Root again has strong backing from many, including Newhart.

"If it's as pretty as the other one," Newhart said, "I don't think anyone will complain." Moyer has no doubts Root will succeed.

"If he gets a hold of something, he follows through and sees it gets done," he said.

More Hoosier Veterans Receiving VA Compensation & Pension

Statistics recently released by the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) show that each year since 2005 the percentage of Hoosier veterans receiving VA compensation or pension (C&P) has steadily increased.

In 2005 the national average of veterans receiving C&P was 11.81%, but Indiana reflected only 9.16% of its veterans receiving one or the other of these benefits from the VA.

In 2006, the national average rose to 12.13% while Indiana was at 9.50%, a .34% increase.

In 2007, the national average rose to 12.46% and Indiana rose to 9.93%, another .43% increase.

And in 2008 the national average rose to 13.13% and Indiana broke the 9% barrier by climbing to 10.58%, a whopping .65% increase.

While the national average rose only 1.32% in the intervening years, Indiana rose by 1.42%.

Additionally, in 2005 only seven (7) Indiana counties matched or exceeded the national average. They were Miami, Grant, Knox, Daviess, Washington, Harrison and Pike. In 2008 there were eight counties. Hancock and Jefferson counties were added and Pike was dropped.

Complete figures will be available at the Conference. Those who wish to see the charts before the Conference should contact Tom Applegate.

Note: All figures represent veteran population and C&P figures for the previous year.

Silver service created for Indiana battleship returns to Hoosier state for public display



First Lady Cheri Daniels pictured with USS Indianapolis survivor Jimmy O'Donnell and his wife Mary Alice view the silver after its return to Indiana

News Release For immediate release

INDIANAPOLIS (February 13, 2008) - After 76 years at sea, the complete sterling silver service created for the USS Indiana in 1896 was reunited today in a special ceremony at the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis. First Lady Cheri Daniels unveiled the collection which is now on display at the USS Indianapolis Museum at the Indiana War Memorial.

"Adding these distinctive pieces to the museum's collection means much to the USS Indianapolis survivors, their families and all Hoosiers," Daniels said.

Tiffany & Co. designed and created the 39-piece set for \$8,000. School children, citizens and businesses raised funds to pay for the collection. Today, the set is valued at \$1.5 million

Since 1973, all but five pieces of the collection were displayed aboard the USS Nimitz. After receiving a request from Governor Mitch Daniels, United States Navy officials worked to transfer the collection to the USS Indianapolis Museum. In December 2007, while the USS Nimitz was docked in San Diego, FedEx employees, at their own expense, packed, provided a personal escort and shipped the 200-pound silver service to Indianapolis. There it was reunited with the remaining five pieces which had been on display at the governor's residence.

The set was originally presented to the USS Indiana in 1896. In 1898, the 20-pound punch bowl was

damaged by a mortar shell fragment while the ship was off the coast of Cuba during the Spanish-American War. The dent was kept intact and is visible today. After the battleship was decommissioned in 1919, the collection was displayed at the Indiana governor's residence.

In 1932, the service was presented to the USS Indianapolis, which became the flagship of the Pacific Fifth Fleet. The cruiser served as the peacetime "ship of state" for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the secretary of the Navy and the set was used for special occasions.

During World War II, the silverware was placed in storage while the ship and its crew participated in nearly every major battle in the Pacific theatre. During a secret mission in 1945, the ship carried components to Tinian Island for the first atomic bomb. A few days after making its delivery, it was sunk in the middle of the Pacific by a Japanese torpedo. Of the 1,197 crew onboard, only 317 survived the attack and five days of floating in shark-infested waters.

The museum is free and open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It is located inside the Indiana War Memorial at 431 North Meridian Street in downtown Indianapolis.

Media contact: Brigadier General J. Stewart Goodwin, Indiana War Memorials Commission, 317/232-7616, sgoodwin@iwm.in.gov

Media contact: Julie Aud, Office of the First Lady, 317/931-3076, jaud@gov.in.gov



USS Indianapolis survivor Jimmy O'Donnell visits with Indiana War Memorial Executive Director Brig General Stewart Goodwin at the unveiling of the silver.

Retired Hoosier US Marine Corps Three Star General Carol Mutter Honored



Retired USMC General Carol, stands with Senator Connie Lawson (R - D 24) as senate concurrent resolution 0044 is read.

Retired USMC Lt. Gen Carol Mutter was honored by the Indiana Senate on February 14, 2008 for being the first woman in the United States Marine Corps to achieve the rank of Lieutenant General.

Carol Mutter served for over 31 years in the U.S. Marine Corps attaining the rank of Lieutenant General. Her military experience included leadership positions in logistics, data processing, financial management, personnel administration, and research, development and acquisition. She served on committees in NATO, was assigned to the U.S. Space Command, and served a total of five years in Okinawa, Japan.

Achieving many firsts for women during her career, Carol was:

- First woman to be qualified as Command Center Crew Commander/Space Director at U.S. Space Command.
- First woman of general/flag rank to command a major deployable tactical command.
- First woman Marine Major General, and senior woman in all the services at that time.
- First woman nominated by the President of the U.S. for three-star rank.

Her non-military awards include the Secretary of Defense Award for Outstanding Public Service, the American Leadership Award from the state of Colorado, the 1992 Trail Blazer award from the University of Northern Colorado, the Living Legacy Patriot Award from the Women's International Center and the Margaret Cochran Corbin Award from the Daughters of the American Revolution and has been inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame.

Carol serves as a Commissioner on the American Battle Monuments Commission, on the National Board of the Women Marines Association, on the National Advisory Council of the Alliance for National Defense, and as a Senior Fellow at the Joint Forces Staff College.

Previously, Carol served as the Chair of the Department of Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), on the National Academy of Sciences Committee on American Youth Population and Military Recruiting, and was the National President of the Women Marines Association.

Carol has given many speeches and participated on panels sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, the Smithsonian Associates, Women in International Security, Women's Research and Education Institute and the Indiana Council on World Affairs.

Working as a consultant, her business has centered on assisting companies in winning government contracts.

In addition to two honorary Doctorate degrees, Carol holds a BA degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Northern Colorado, has an MA degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College at Newport, RI and an MS degree from Salve Regina College, also in Newport, RI.



Where are They Now?

Meet Ray Grooms

Class of 1980



*By Michelle Perkins,
Alumni Editor, the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home "The Home Journal"*

Article reprinted with permission

Ray Grooms came to our Home in June, 1968, with big sisters Elaine and Carol, little sister Teresa, and little brother, Phil. Originally from Crawfordsville, Indiana, the Home became Ray's new "home town". It was his early foundation and taught him good lessons, perhaps most importantly to think positively, even when things do not always go well. While at the Home, Ray worked many trades but especially remembers working in the Print Shop with Mr. Larry Kuhlman as his teacher. Ray graduated in May of 1980, ready to start his next adventure.

Sometimes it is not clear what should come next or where we are really meant to be. Ray went on to college for a bit, and even spent some time in sunny Florida, but things were not working out the way he hoped. He made a pivotal decision to move back to Indiana, lived with his sister Carol, and joined the Indiana Army National Guard as a Field Artillery man. Living in Greencastle, he completed his guard stint and decided to enlist into active duty in the Air Force. Ray became part of the Security Forces troop which turned out to be a great fit for him. His life now had new possibilities and took an exciting turn for the better.

The Air Force provided Ray with wonderful blessings and opportunities. Case in point, he met and married his sweetheart, Linda (who also serves in the Air Force.) They have a beautiful and bright eleven year old son Ray, whom they adore. Being in the Air Force

has also helped Ray see the world. He has been stationed all over the lower forty-eight states, and also had the good fortune to spend part of his career abroad. He was stationed in Germany (his favorite), Panama, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). His last assignment was in Alaska, just outside of Fairbanks. Ray noted that Alaska is truly a beautiful place where he hopes to spend his golden years.

These days Ray and his lovely family live outside of Rapid City, South Dakota. After 25-1/2 years of military service, he retired the first part of this year. Ray shared that he's "bored out of his skull" but he does get to spend quality time watching Ray grow plus enjoy some of his hobbies. Right now, he is working on stained glass projects. Although he is not sure how this particular hobby is going, he knows he has many more miles to go with his only son; it's good to be able to enjoy special family time now.

Ray is a devoted husband and father. He has had a wonderful career in the Air Force and served our country well. And he is a good and thoughtful friend to his Home brothers and sisters. It is a pleasure to know him and call him "little brother."

Note: We at IDVA feel this article in general, and Ray Grooms in particular, illustrate the good work being done at the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home in Knightstown, Indiana. Success stories like these happen at the Home every year, year in and year out. Ray could have just as easily fallen through the cracks and never been able to be successful but, because the Home was there and because of the caring people on staff, and because of his own perseverance, Ray was able to make something of his life. The Home is one of Indiana's greatest assets.



Here We Grow Again



The State Approving Agency is proud to welcome its newest Program Director, Steven Poole. Originally from Indianapolis, Indiana where he graduated from Northwest High School. Steven joined the Air Force at age 17 and served honorably for 6 years. His primary specialty was Aerospace Maintenance Craftsman on the C-130 aircraft. He has

deployed twice, once in 2003 to Balad, Air Base Iraq as an Escort with Security Forces and again to Kuwait in 2007.

Steven was the Non Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the Aerospace Support Section at his last duty station on Yokota Air Base, Japan (Tokyo) where he served from Feb 2005 - October 2007. In addition to his active duty time in Japan, he completed a Human Resource (HR) Internship with the Department of Defense. Steven worked in the Human Resource Office during the morning hours under the guidance of HR Director, Jose Flores, while serving his country at night as NCOIC, Aerospace Support Section. He separated from the military in October 2007, and immediately before joining the IDVA staff he worked as a Human Resource Manager for Sears.

Steven is a graduate of Park University holding a Bachelor of Science in Business Management with a major in Human Resources. He also received an Associate of Applied Science from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) with a major in Aviation Maintenance Technology. Currently he is scheduled to graduate in 2009 from Park University completing an MBA with emphasis on International Business. Steven has volunteered in many organizations while in Japan to include the Yokota Homeless Ministry where he organized meals to feed the homeless in the Tokyo's Metropolitan area. He also volunteered for 2 years as Sports Coordinator for the Special Olympics and plans to continue the same here in Indianapolis, Indiana.

State Approving Agency (SAA) Steven Poole

Since the consolidation of the two SAA's (Public and Private) under the single roof of the IDVA, we have all been very busy. There has been a rise in new program approvals and veteran's inquiries/walk-ins has increased. The SAA Director and Program Directors have blended together extremely well and have done a tremendous job managing the Montgomery GI Bill program for the state of Indiana.

To view the complete SAA staff, see <http://www.in.gov/dva/3006.htm>. The State Approving Agency continues to remain educated on current changes regarding the Montgomery GI Bill to serve the educational needs of our Hoosier veterans. Below you will find the latest updates.

New Policy for On-the- Job Training

There is no longer any prohibition against the receipt of the journeyman wage rate from the beginning of a public sector OJT program. There are some guidelines in place for agency use. This is in response to a closer examination of title 38, section 3677(b)(1). A broader understanding of OJT programs as they are used in today's society and their associated impact on veterans and their dependants, and consultation with VA's General Counsel. Originally it was required that benefits be terminated once a veteran received the journeyman level wage, which was intended by congress to prevent individuals from receiving education benefits for OJT programs while also receiving Journeyman wages. Now, a veteran will not stop receiving benefits once reaching journeyman wage rates so long as the individual is pursuing a valid OJT program.

New Changes to the GI Bill

Public Law 110-181, commonly known as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2008 made several changes to the GI Bill for reservist. Here are a few highlights to the changes:

Continued on page 8)

Accelerated payment for MGIB-SR and REAP:

Effective 10/01/2008 reservists otherwise eligible for MGIB-SR or REAP may receive accelerated payments for a non-degree program lasting 2 years or less.

Qualifications for the 80% rate for REAP based on aggregate service of 3 or more years:

The old legislation required an individual to have a service period of more than 2 years on active duty to receive the 80% rate. The new legislation has made the 80% rate available to anyone who was mobilized for at least 2 continuous years of active duty **OR** served multiple mobilizations totaling 3 years or more.

\$600 buy-up program for REAP Participants

Eligible REAP participants may now participate in the “buy-up” program. Eligible reservists may pay up to \$600.00 to increase their monthly rate of pay by as much as \$150.00 per month. You must be a member of a Ready Reserve component (Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve, or Inactive National Guard) to pay into the “buy-up” program.

Modified ending dates for MGIB-SR participants separated from the Selected Reserve:

Retroactive 9/11/2001, REAP participants who separated from the Selected Reserve after completing their service contract under other than dishonorable conditions are now eligible for REAP benefits for 10 years after they are separated from the Selected Reserve. An individual must have separated from the Selected Reserve, not the IRR/ING.

Retention of REAP eligibility during breaks in Selected Reserve service for members who remain in the Ready Reserve

A member who is involuntarily separated from the Selected Reserve due to a deactivation of his or her unit is now eligible for MGIB-SR for a period of 14 years from their original date of eligibility. The deactivation must occur between 10/31/2007 and 9/30/2014. The effective date of the law is January 28, 2008.

Retention of REAP eligibility during breaks in Selected Reserve Service:

Retroactive 9/11/2001, A new law has expanded eligibility to anyone having a break in service

(regardless of length) as long as they continue to serve in another component of the Ready Reserve (such as IRR or ING) during a break in service. Under previous regulations reservists had to have a break in service of 90 days or less to maintain their eligibility to REAP.

GI Bill Rate of Pay for On-the-Job Training Drops by \$100 Dollars

The GI Bill rate of pay for on-the-job training has also dropped by \$100 dollars a month. Effective Jan 1, the maximum payment for on-the-job training for those who served at least three years of active duty is \$825 for the first six months of training, \$605.55 for the second six months and 385.35 for any remaining training. Since Oct. 1, the rates had been \$935.85 for the first six months, \$715.65 for the second six months and \$494.45 for the remainder. For people who served fewer than three years of active duty, the new benefit rates are similar, but a little over \$100 dollars less.

While GI Bill benefits for attending college are available to people while they are still on **active duty**, the apprenticeship and on-the-job training benefits are restricted to veterans and members of the National Guard and reserve. The latter are available to members upon separation or retirement.

For complete details on the changes to the GI Bill, visit www.gibill.va.gov or call the VA at 1-888-442-4551. For details on GI Bill rates of pay, visit www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_info/rates.htm.



Indiana National Guard Hoosier Patriot Memorial
The Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Center, located at 10612 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, dedicated this beautiful memorial on November 8, 2007. The memorial depicts an Indiana Army National Guard soldier holding an Iraqi child.

Getting Home, Getting Back on Your Feet

Stephanie Meyers
Practicum Student,
IU School of Social Work
Chapter 31 Student

Many veterans find themselves returning to their lives but being incapable of returning to their previous line of work. There is help. The Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program can help service-connected veterans get back into the workforce or live more independently.

Veterans are eligible for an evaluation by VR&E if their discharges are other than dishonorable, they have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, and they have submitted a complete application for VR&E services. The period of eligibility for VR&E is 12 years from the date of discharge or the date the veteran was informed of the disability rating, whichever is later.

After being found eligible, the veteran must be found entitled. During this process, the veteran and a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) assess the veteran's interests and abilities. The degree to which the veteran's service connected disability impacts his/her ability to find/keep a job using the skills the veteran already possesses is also evaluated. The VRC and the veteran also explore vocations and develop goals.

Based on these assessments, the VRC determines whether or not the veteran has an employment handicap. Entitlement is established if the veteran has a 20% or service-connected disability rating and is within the 12 year eligibility. If the rating is below 20% or the veteran is outside of the 12 year eligibility window, the veteran must have a serious employment handicap to be found entitled. This is important because, as stated above, a veteran only needs a 10% rating to be evaluated.

An entitled veteran will work with his/her VRC to select an appropriate program ultimately leading to an employment or independent living goal. They will identify intermediate level goals by deter-

mining what skills the veteran already possesses, what training the veteran may need, what labor market and wage trends have an effect on the target employment, and by identifying any resources that may be necessary to achieve employment rehabilitation. Finally, they will jointly develop an individualized rehabilitation plan that both of them will sign specifically stating the immediate goals. This will be reviewed annually to ensure that they are on the "right track" toward rehabilitation.

My experience with the Chapter 31 program has been exceptional. The VRC's at Indianapolis's Regional Office have been wonderful. It is a lot of work. You cannot just go into their office and say I want to go to school to be this and have them pay for it. I took a lot of assessments for personality and interests. I saw an independent professional for the testing and assessments. I had interviews with a Clinical Social Worker.

In the end, all the testing indicated that I would be a good social worker. I did research into the labor market and the need for social workers. If they paid to send me to school, how likely was it that I could get a job when I graduated? In this case, social workers are in demand. The need is increasing 26% faster than the national average. So, they sent me to school.

I am finishing my junior year and doing my practicum right here at IDVA. I love what I do. I am on the board of the student association. I think all the testing really paid off. Whenever I have a need, I know that I can call my VRC but the need doesn't arise often. They check up on me from time to time and we have our annual review of my plan. I'll be graduating before long and then I'll be out in the world. Maybe if I am lucky, I can be a social worker like them. I can help people like me be the best that they can be, again.

*Source for Chapter 31 Material:
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/vrs.htm>

Department of Veterans Affairs
Vocational Rehabilitation
575 N. Pennsylvania
Indianapolis, IN 46204
1-800-827-1000

Most Vietnam Veterans Can Be Enrolled at VA Medical Centers

IDVA has received confirmation that most Vietnam veterans can be enrolled in Priority Group 6 at any VA facility, making them eligible for VA health care.

Priority Group 6 includes veterans who are receiving care for illnesses associated with Agent Orange exposure. Vietnam veterans are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange if they served in Vietnam from 1962 through May 1975.

Priority Group 6 veterans will have no co-payments for treatment for illness's associated with exposure to Agent Orange. For non-exposure illness or injuries they may be charged co-payments for medical care and medications.

To be eligible, Army and Marine DD 214s must show receipt of the Vietnam Campaign Medal. If they received only the Vietnam Service Medal their DD 214 must show their dates of in-country service in Vietnam. Navy (Blue Water) and Air Force DD 214s must indicate receipt of the Vietnam Service Medal.

Many thanks to personnel at the Northern Indiana Health Care System (NIHCS) for their assistance with this article. Ed.

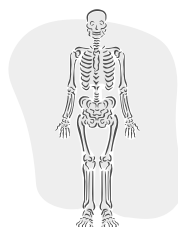
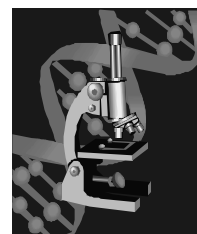
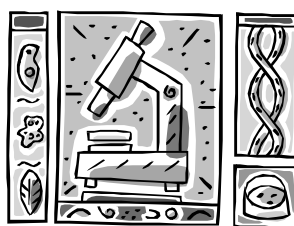


Tutoring Sessions Offered This Summer

A retired military officer and his wife, both of whom are college instructors, will be offering tutoring to veterans to help prepare them for college-level science classes for those who are preparing for careers in the health care field. Classes run for 4 weeks each starting in June, and running through August. Classes will meet on Monday and Weds or Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30pm to 8:00pm in Broad Ripple. Courses cost \$250 per student and include most of the course materials.

They will also be offering a total of 5hrs/week for 4 weeks (20 hours) intense preparatory training in Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Genetics, Chemistry, and Molecular Biology at a cost of \$12.50 per hour. Each monthly session will be targeted to one of these areas, and is limited to only 35 students per month.

This is an opportunity for veterans who are considering careers in science or who may be struggling with college science classes. For more information please contact Lt Colonel (Ret) Michael Yard at myard@iupui.edu or call 317-278-2297.



The Indiana Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial Wall

**Indiana has sustained the following
casualties since the last Update**



**Maryland Army National Guard
Sergeant First Class Collin J. Bowen,
38, formerly of Marion, Indiana.**

Died March 14, 2008 in a Texas hospital, weeks after he was wounded in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan. He was assigned to 1st Battalion 175th Infantry Regiment, Maryland Army National Guard, Towson, Maryland.

Collin volunteered to go to Afghanistan in November 2006. He graduated from Marion High School in 1988.



**United States Army Staff Sergeant
Michael D. Elledge, 41, Browns-
burg, Indiana.**

Died March 17, 2008 in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds suffered when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device during combat operations.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.



DOD Phasing Out Full Social Security Numbers on IDs

by Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- As a means of combating identity theft, the Defense Department will issue identification cards without full Social Security numbers printed onto them, a senior official said here April 3.

The Defense Department cares about protecting personal information as well as increasing database security, said Mary Dixon, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center based in Arlington, Va.

Identity theft is a very real problem today, Ms. Dixon explained. Criminals who pilfer SSN-bearing identity cards can virtually assume someone's identity through a few computer keystrokes and clicks of a mouse, she said.

Tricare, the military services' health maintenance organization, already has removed Social Security numbers from its members' identification cards, Ms. Dixon said.

Plans are to remove the Social Security numbers from identification cards issued to military family members by the end of this year, Ms. Dixon said, noting that those cards still would display the sponsors' SSN, for now. Between 2009 and 2010, all department-issued identification cards will feature only the last four digits of a holder's Social Security number, she said.

About 3.4 million people now have department-issued common access cards, Ms. Dixon said. Around two-thirds of those card holders are military members, and some civilians who deploy overseas, who have full Social Security numbers printed onto the back of their CACs.

"You might lose that card," Ms. Dixon pointed out, noting that family members, including children, could misplace their identification cards, too.

Modern information technology precludes the need to have full Social Security numbers printed onto employee and family member ID cards, Ms. Dixon said.

"Today, all of our (computer) systems can 'talk' to each other, so we don't necessarily need to know all of that information printed on your card," she said.

New identification cards will be issued as they reach their expiration dates, Ms. Dixon said. (Courtesy of Air Force Print News)





Director's Comments

Even though the latest round of the state legislature was a short session, several significant pieces of legislation were signed into law by Governor Daniels. We plan on suggesting several changes to existing legislation next year. For now, here's what is new:

On February 27, 2008 the Governor signed HB 1077 (IC 10-18-8-1) which pertains to funding for local Memorial Day celebrations. The new legislation removes the limit on the amount a township, city, town, or county may appropriate to certain veterans' organizations to aid in defraying Memorial Day expenses.

On March 3, 2008 Governor Daniels signed SB250 (IC 10-17-9) pertaining to the Indiana Veterans' Home. The bill transfers responsibility for the Indiana Veterans' Home from the state health commis-

to the department of veterans' affairs effective July 1, 2008.

On March 5, 2008 the Governor signed HB 1067 (IC 10-18-9) pertaining to United States flag protocol for Indiana soldiers. The new law requires the governor to issue a proclamation, not more than 24 hours after receiving notice that an Indiana resident who is a member of the armed forces of the United States or the Indiana National Guard has died in action or as a result of wounds received in action, ordering that the United States flag be flown at half-staff on state property on the day of the member's funeral or memorial service.

On March 19, 2008 Governor Daniels signed HEA 1153 (IC 4-32.2-4-13) which authorizes certain qualified organizations (such as veterans' organization posts) to conduct winner take all drawings under a PPT license.

And finally, on March 24, 2008 Governor Daniels signed HB 1249 (IC 21-14-10) which provides a remission of tuition fees at state supported colleges and universities for recipients of the Purple Heart medal. The bill also restricts the remission of fees to students those who are enrolled in undergraduate studies.